

Senior Conference 2019



Dates: 17-24th August 2019

Venue: Sibford School, Banbury, OX15 5QL

Cost: £360

Theme: Quakers in the 21st Century: What will our chapter be?

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More info: www.fsse.org.uk/sc/

What is Senior Conference?

Senior Conference is a week-long spiritual gathering, providing the opportunity to explore the Quaker faith and how it can be practised in today's world. It is run by and for young people aged 15 to 18. It is a place of friendship, laughter, and reflection, which builds a strong and supportive community over the course of the week, and friendships which last a lifetime.

What is the focus of the week?

We explore the theme of the year with visiting speakers, in small group discussions and through shared activities. In previous years, speakers have included famous authors, serving MPs, former Guantanamo detainees, asylum seekers, activists and workers from a variety of areas of Quaker organisations across the UK and worldwide.

How do we create a community?

Family-sized groups of young people, called base groups, meet twice each day to have fun, get to know each other and share ideas in a supportive environment. These groups are facilitated by participants. All participants are expected to participate in all sessions, which are designed to be enjoyable and inclusive to all, and it is this spirit that spreads through the community. As such, drinking alcohol, drug taking and sexual activity are not allowed at the event, including during the outing to Oxford. Smoking is forbidden on the school site and is discouraged at the event, but we recognise that some participants may be addicted so special provisions are made to allow individuals to smoke if they declare themselves a smoker at the start of the event. They will then be asked to sign to agree to the smoking boundaries at the event.

What else happens?

In the afternoons a choice of workshop activities are offered. In the past, these have included arts and craft, circus skills, drama, cooking, countryside walks and discussion groups.

Participants will be asked prior to the event which workshop they wish to do for the week. In the evenings, everyone comes back together for entertainments sessions which in the past have included wide games, discos and open mic nights. Quaker worship frames the event with short meetings for worship at the beginning and end of each day. It is a very busy and intense week so it is also important everyone is able to get enough sleep. See the FSSE website for example timetables and previous epistles (www.fsse.org.uk/sc/parentinfo/); there is also a FSSE Facebook page.

How is it organised?

Each year Senior Conference is organised and run by a new Arrangements Committee of about ten 16-18 year olds with responsibilities for Clerkship, Eldership, Oversight, arranging Entertainments and co-ordinating Base Group facilitation. They are each nominated by a nominations committee of their peers and appointed at the preceding year's event. They are supported in their roles by a team of adult volunteers, led by two adult co-ordinators. Overall responsibility for the event rests with Friends Southern Summer Events (FSSE). All FSSE events follow safety guidelines outlined by Britain Yearly Meeting. Further information is available on the FSSE website: www.fsse.org.uk/fsse/organisation/

Who can go?

Senior Conference is not just for young people who attend their local meeting on a regular basis. It is for 15-18 year olds interested in Quakerism. Often there is a link to a local meeting (often through a parent or grandparent). There are places for 85 young people.

Where does it take place?

For many years Senior Conference has been held in the beautiful surrounding of Sibford School, a Quaker boarding school in rural Oxfordshire (www.sibfordschool.co.uk). Participants stay in shared bedrooms in same gender boarding houses and all bedding is provided. All meals are provided by the school (please state any dietary requirements on the application form.)

What are the travel arrangements?

Participants should make their own arrangements to travel to and from the event. There are regular trains to Banbury from London Marylebone. A coach is provided to and from Banbury station for those who require it. The coach will leave Banbury station at about 4pm on the Saturday and return participants to Banbury train station at about 2pm on the following Saturday. Exact times will be confirmed in the final mailing once payment has been received. The Arrangements Committee will be expected to arrive 24hrs before the event to make final preparations.

Is there help available to pay?

The majority (more than two thirds) of the event fee pays for food and accommodation. However, we do not want anyone to be prevented from coming due to cost. Most local and area meetings have funds available to help with these costs. An overseer at your local meeting is a good first point of contact. FSSE can grant a limited number of bursaries which are intended for use if for some reason your local and area meetings are not able to help. If you need help of this nature please get in touch.

How do you apply?

Please fill in the online application form: www.fsse.org.uk/sc/apply/
Whilst the Arrangements Committee places are guaranteed they still need to complete and submit the application form.

